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philippine studies: historical and ethnographic viewpoints

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Editor's Introduction

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Editor's Introduction

On 16 September 1991 the Philippine Senate voted against a proposed treaty to extend the presence of United States military bases in the Philippines. To observers the rejection of the treaty was unexpected, even contemptuous of the US, the lone superpower at the end of the Cold War. How did the unthinkable happen? In his professorial address, based on his keynote address at a conference organized by this journal to commemorate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the historic Senate vote, Roland G. Simbulan narrates the convergence of predisposing factors: the prohibition against nuclear weapons in the 1987 Constitution, the hubris of the US as manifested in the undiplomatic ways of its negotiating team, the US culpability in supporting the Marcos dictatorship in disregard of democratic principles, and the strategies of the anti-bases and anti-treaty movements that included inroads in the executive and legislative branches of the Philippine government.

Simbulan's account, however, is also suggestive of a range of personal reasons, including kinship and personal relationships, behind each senator's vote. Simbulan mentions the possibility of one senator voting against the treaty to spite the sitting president, Corazon Aquino, who advocated the treaty's passage, while another senator, despite being against the bases, voted for the treaty because of ties to the president. In making history, the senators were motivated by a complex mix of factors, some nationalistic, others not so. However, terminating the US military bases was one thing; the development of a credible defense system against external threats, another—a lesson with far-reaching implications that, Simbulan admits, the Philippines has not learned.

Although parsing individual motivations can be complicated, the presentation of self is directly observable—and if one's persona leads to, in this case, a senator's vote for or against the US bases, then one has tangible evidence of a discrete social act. The presentation of self, however, has become complicated in the age of the internet, particularly with social media. In studying migrant Filipino men's use of Facebook in South Korea, Clement C. Camposano demonstrates that “performance” online, with its narrative

of the self, does not necessarily overlap with the offline self. Mediation by technology enables some facets of the self to be accentuated, while other facets are obscured. Rather than merely instinctive, the enactment of plural identities can be quite intentional as evinced by a “meticulous curation of impressions” (43) online. This disjunction between online and offline selves becomes acute for migrants who, Camposano argues, deal with displacement by using social media to attain a measure of continuity and stability.

On a civilizational scale, Isaac Donoso wonders why Muslims in Mindanao would write Spanish in Jawi, the localized Arabic script, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth centuries and in the process unwittingly recover the legacy of Muslims on the Iberian Peninsula who, during the medieval period, wrote Spanish using Arabic. In this case, individual motivations seem immaterial in the face of macrohistorical forces that brought both Arabic and Spanish cultures to the Philippines. And yet, within the given circumstances, the persons who pursued “diplomatic relations” between Spanish Manila and the Tausug and Maguindanao sultanates must have taken to writing Spanish in Jawi with deliberateness. The Catalan Fr. Jacinto Juanmartí SJ, who joined the Jesuit mission in Mindanao in 1867, studied the Maguindanao language and used Jawi in writing Spanish texts—in the process becoming a pioneer of Moro philology.

In a research note, Ann M. Pobutsky and Enrico I. Neri offer a brief study of Filipino migration to Guam particularly since the island became a US territory following the 1898 Treaty of Paris. Using census data, hence unable to delve into migrant desires, Pobutsky and Neri show that Filipino migration to Guam accelerated after the Second World War because of the need for skilled labor in reconstruction work. As a result Filipinos predominated in various occupational categories, except among professionals. However, since the more diversified Asian migrations to Guam started in the 1970s, there is no longer any Filipino preponderance in any occupational category.

We in *Philippine Studies: Historical and Ethnographic Viewpoints* have been striving to strengthen our book reviews section. In 2017 twenty-six book reviews were published, in contrast to just eight in 2016 and another eight in 2015. With the help of reviewers and publishers, we hope to replicate last year’s achievement and sustain the momentum for the benefit of readers as well as the authors of these books.

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